

CLAIMS

1. A communications system comprising:

at least one user device, said at least one user device configured to access a plurality of services in a session;

an information store for storing information defining an amount of money for said at least one user device; and

a controller for requesting at least a portion of said amount of money to be reserved as a reserved portion and for controlling an allocation of said reserved portion between said plurality of services.
2. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reserved portion is divided into a plurality of parts between said plurality of services.
3. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said reserved portion is divided equally.
4. A system as claimed in claim 2, wherein said reserved portion is reallocated between said plurality of services when at least one of said plurality of services uses up its part of said reserved portion.
5. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reserved portion is allocated based on which of said plurality of services requires said reserved portion.

6. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reserved portion is allocated dynamically.

7. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said reserved portion is allocated based on at least one of:

service activity; number of services; and a unit cost of said plurality of services.

8. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller is configured to monitor how much of said reserved portion has been used.

9. A system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said reserved amount is monitored by periodically determining how much of said reserved portion each of said plurality of services have used to provide a plurality of values and summing the plurality of values.

10. A system as claimed in claim 8, wherein said controller is configured to monitor how much of said reserved portion has been used by using information defining a cost of said plurality of services.

11. A system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said information comprises a cost for one of a data or time unit.

12. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein when said reserved portion is used up or has been at least partially used up a further portion of said amount of money is reservable.

13. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein a plurality of said plurality of services is accessed simultaneously.

14. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said information store comprises one of: a monetary value; a data amount representative of said amount of money; a time representative of said amount of money; and an amount of a service access parameter.

15. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said plurality of services comprises an Internet service.

16. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller comprises a plurality of entities.

17. A system as claimed in claim 16, wherein said plurality of entities comprises at least one of a traffic analyzer and a credit controller.

18. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller comprises a credit controller.

19. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said at least one user device is arranged to access a plurality of different service classed in a session.

20. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said controller is configured to store information relating to a cost of said plurality of services.

21. A communications system comprising:
at least one user device, said at least one user device being configured to access a plurality of services simultaneously;
a first entity for storing information defining an amount of money for said at least one user device; and
a controller for requesting reservation of at least a portion of said amount of money as a reserved portion,
wherein said first entity is configured to send information defining an amount of said reserved portion in a first form and said controller is arranged to convert information relating to said amount of said reserved portion to a second form.

22. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said first entity is configured to store data defining an amount of said reserved portion.

23. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said first entity is configured to store a reference name in association with data defining the amount of said reserved portion.

24. A system as claimed in claim 23, wherein said data is one of a cost for a unit amount of a payment parameter of at least one service of said plurality of services.

25. A system as claimed in claim 24, wherein said payment parameter is data volume, time, or service parameter of at least one service of said plurality of services.

26. A system as claimed in claim 23, wherein said reference name is a dummy APN.

27. A system as claimed in claim 23, wherein the reservation requested by said controller to said first entity comprises said reference name.

28. A system as claimed in claim 24, wherein said information in said first form comprises said unit amount.

29. A system as claimed in claim 28, wherein said controller is arranged to convert said unit amount to a corresponding monetary amount to provide said second form.

30. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said first entity operates in accordance with a CAMEL protocol.

31. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said controller operates in accordance with a RADIUS protocol.

32. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said first form comprises at least one of time, data volume, or service access parameter.

33. A system as claimed in claim 32, wherein said service access parameter comprises at least one of number of clicks or number of accesses.

34. A system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said second form comprises monetary value, number of clicks and number of accesses.

35. A communications method comprising the steps of:
accessing a plurality of services in a session;
storing information defining an amount of money for at least one user device;
requesting at least a portion of said amount of money to be reserved as a reserved portion; and

controlling an allocation of said reserved portion between said plurality of services.

36. A controller for use in a communications system comprising:

at least one user device, said at least one user device being configured to access a plurality of services in a session; and

an information store for storing information defining an amount of money for said at least one user device, said controller being configured to request at least a portion of said amount of money to be reserved as a reserved portion and to control an allocation of said reserved portion between said plurality of services.

37. A communications method comprising the steps of:

accessing a plurality of services simultaneously;

storing information defining an amount of money for at least one user device;

requesting a reservation of at least a portion of said amount of money as a reserved portion;

sending information defining an amount of said reserved portion in a first form;
and

converting information relating to said amount of said portion to a second form.

38. A controller for use in a communications system comprising:

at least one user device, said at least one user device being configured to access a plurality of services simultaneously; and

a first entity for storing information defining an amount of money for said at least one user device, said controller being configured to request a reservation of at least a portion of said amount of money as a reserved portion, and to convert information defining an amount of said reserved portion in a first form received from said first entity to a second form.

39. A communications system comprising:

accessing means for accessing a plurality of services in a session;

storing means for storing information defining an amount of money for at least one user device;

requesting means for requesting at least a portion of said amount of money to be reserved as a reserved portion; and

controlling means for controlling an allocation of said reserved portion between said plurality of services.

40. A communications system comprising:

accessing means for accessing a plurality of services simultaneously;

storing means for storing information defining an amount of money for at least one user device;

requesting means for requesting a reservation of at least a portion of said amount of money as a reserved portion;

sending means for sending information defining an amount of said reserved portion in a first form; and

converting means for converting information relating to said amount of said portion to a second form.

41. A system as claimed in claim 40, wherein said requesting means is configured to monitor how much of said reserved portion has been used.

42. A system as claimed in claim 41, wherein said requesting means is configured to monitor how much of said reserved portion has been used by using information defining a cost of said plurality of services.

43. A system as claimed in claim 40, wherein said storing means comprises one of: a monetary value; a data amount representative of said amount of money; a time representative of said amount of money; and an amount of a service access parameter.

44. A system as claimed in claim 40, wherein said requesting means comprises a plurality of entities.

45. A system as claimed in claim 40, wherein said requesting means comprises a credit controller.

46. A system as claimed in claim 40, wherein said requesting means is configured to store information relating to a cost of said plurality of services.